

Myths & Facts

About Generic Medications

You & Your Health Care Professional

Myth: Generics are not as safe as brand-name medications.

Fact: The Food and Drug Administration requires that all medications be safe and effective and that their benefits outweigh their risks. Since generics use the same active ingredients and are shown to work the same way in the body, they have the same risk-benefit profile as their brand-name counterparts.

Myth: Generics are not as good as brand-name medications because they are less expensive.

Fact: Generic drugs are less expensive because generic manufacturers don't have the investment costs of the developer of a new drug. New drugs are developed under patent protection. The patent protects the investment, including research, development, marketing, and promotion, by giving the company the sole right to sell the drug while it is in effect.

TRICARE's Generic Drug Policy

TRICARE's mandatory generic drug policy, which has been in place for more than 10 years, requires that prescriptions be filled with a generic product, if one is available. As with most prescription drug plans, beneficiaries may enjoy a significant cost savings by asking their doctors to prescribe the generic equivalent of a brand-name drug. In the United States, all generic drugs must undergo Food and Drug Administration testing and approval, and are considered safe alternatives to brand-name drugs. To learn more about any medication, check for generic equivalents, and even learn about common drug interactions, beneficiaries may use the TRICARE Formulary Search Tool, which is available at www.tricareformularysearch.org.



Review Your Medications

Take time to understand your medications and reduce the likelihood for complications.



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Tips for Managing your Medications



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How Can I Properly Manage My Medications?

Twelve easy-to-follow tips to better your understanding of your medications and to reduce the likelihood for unnecessary and avoidable complications.



- 1** Keep a personal list of all drug therapy, including prescription medications, nonprescription medications, home remedies, and medical foods that you take and show it to the health care professional(s) managing your care.
- 2** Maintain a list of medications that you cannot take (for reasons like allergic reactions). Give the reasons why, and show it to the health care professional(s) managing your care.
- 3** If you are currently taking several different medications, use a daily organizer to keep track.
- 4** Learn the names of the medications and products that are prescribed and administered to you, as well as their dosage strength and schedules.
- 5** Keep medications in their original containers. Avoid storing different medications together in the same container unless you are currently using a daily organizer clearly identifying your medications. This will avoid confusion with identification and administration.
- 6** Be familiar with your medications. Make sure to open and check your medications before leaving the pharmacy. Question anything you don't understand or that doesn't seem right changes in medication size, shape, color, smell, and markings. Communicating with your health care professionals is the easiest way to avoid unnecessary medication problems.
- 7** Be aware of any potential side effects of the medications or products you are currently using. Ask your pharmacist for a medication information sheet if it is not already provided when you receive your prescriptions. You can also refer to our website at www.tricareformularysearch.org for additional information.
- 8** Ask your health care professional(s) if you should avoid certain foods, beverages, other medicines or activities while you are taking the medication(s).
- 9** If you are pregnant or breast feeding, ask your health care professional before taking any prescription or over-the-counter medications.
- 10** Take medications exactly as directed by your health care professional. Only use your medications for their intended purposes. Avoid saving medications beyond the time period they are prescribed. Avoid storing medications in the bathroom or in places with temperature change. Old and unused medications can result in useless or harmful effects if stored in a place with moisture or temperature change or if administered past the expiration date.
- 11** When traveling, be sure to carry your medications with you, not in your luggage.
- 12** If you are unable to use your medications and/or products correctly, ask a family member or friend to help. Be sure person(s) assisting you are familiar with these tips.

